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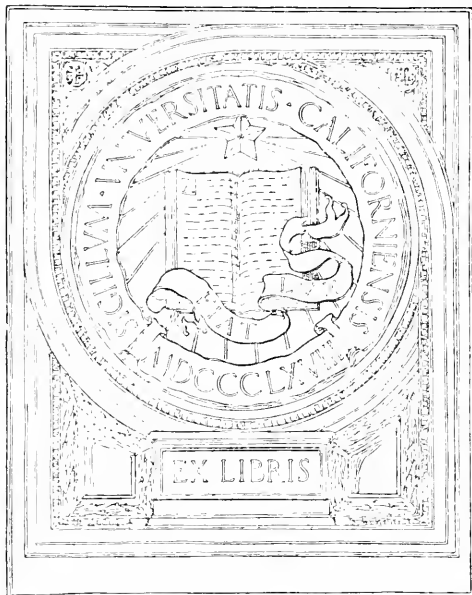
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Electrical and mechanical system of voting

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GIFT OF  
Mrs. Helen Groff and  
Mrs. Mary Cooper

# ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SYSTEM OF VOTING

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE

## COMMITTEE ON ACCOUNTS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SIXTY-FOURTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

## H. RES. 223

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE AND INSTAL-  
LATION OF AN ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL  
SYSTEM OF VOTING IN THE HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES



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## ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SYSTEM OF VOTING.

COMMITTEE ON ACCOUNTS,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
*Monday, May 15, 1916.*

The committee this day met, Hon. James T. Lloyd (chairman) presiding.

The CHAIRMAN. We have met this morning for the purpose of having a hearing on House resolution No. 223, introduced by Mr. Howard. Mr. Howard is here and we will be glad to hear from him.

### STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM S. HOWARD, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA.

Mr. HOWARD. Mr. Chairman, this is a resolution introduced by me at the suggestion of several of the officials of the House and many Members of the House. The purpose of this legislation is to appoint a committee to investigate the advisability of purchasing a system by which the vote of the House can be recorded accurately and more promptly than it is under the present system. During a long session of Congress some mathematician, a Member of the House, figured the time consumed by Congress in calling the roll during that session of Congress, and it amounted, I think, to 56 days of that long session. That was the time consumed in roll calls. There is another evil about our present system, and I think the Speaker and the chairman of every prominent committee in the House, and all of the old Members who have been here for years, will agree that under the present system the business of Congress being so great, and the work falling upon the shoulders of Members of Congress is reaching such proportions that it is almost impossible for Members to devote the time to legislative matters that they should. The close proximity of the House Office Building makes it so easy for any one Member at any time, if he desires to do it, to tie up the deliberations of the House for a period extending from an hour to two hours by making points of no quorum.

I was here over 20 years ago as private secretary to a Senator. At that time they did not have any office building; the offices were scattered all over the town, and when the House met at 11 o'clock or 12 o'clock, as it does now, all of the Members would gather in the House and they would stay on the floor of the House during all of the session, so that it was the rarest of occurrences for a point of no quorum to be made and no quorum found. I believe that if some system can be found by which we can save the 40 minutes which it takes to make a roll call—I believe that is the time, is it not, Mr. South?

Mr. SOUTH. From 40 to 45 minutes.

Mr. HOWARD. Well, an average of 40 minutes. I believe if some system could be found by which that time could be saved it would be of great benefit in carrying on the business of the House.

The CHAIRMAN. In order to protect the reading clerks, who dislike very much to have it go on record as consuming that much time, you will pardon me for saying that the reading clerks insist that they can call the roll in 25 minutes, but they must call the roll twice, and that accounts for it taking 40 minutes.

Mr. HOWARD. Yes; I mean a complete roll call; I did not mean that the roll was called once; I mean it consumes that time under our system of calling the roll a second time.

Then, another thing is this: Inaccuracies in roll calls are obliged to occur, and for this reason: While the roll is being called there is so much confusion on the floor of the House, and it is called with such rapidity, that the tally clerks, as a rule, can hardly hear the responses, and the clerk can hardly hear them. As you gentlemen know from your experience in Congress there is hardly a morning, after a roll call of the previous day, that one or more gentlemen do not get up to correct the roll call. That is not so much an evil, if you may term it an evil, but it is a waste of time.

I do not believe it will be possible to have any more short sessions of Congress, because the business of this country has grown immensely in the last few years and governmental activities are increasing every day, but I do believe that we could lop off under this system, in a long session, not less than 30 days, and I am going to tell you why. Some electrical system, such as has been installed in the State Legislature of Wisconsin, and such as is presented to the Members here for their personal observation by the gentleman who has this electrical device here, will not only save at least 30 minutes on each roll call, but I believe it will have a tendency to keep Members on the floor of the House, and keep them on the floor from the time the House meets until it adjourns. And there is where we lose our time.

Mr. HICKS. You propose to economize in time by the use of this system and you think that will preclude Members from taking the time to come over to the House on each roll call?

Mr. HOWARD. Yes; that is it. For instance, I understand that under this device not only can the Members vote, but the vote being counted automatically by some system which is on the Speaker's desk, a little meter, will be known almost at once, the ayes and nays and those present. This system, as I understand it, contemplates each man having a key to vote with and nobody else can vote for him. It is perfectly accurate, and if a man wants to change his vote——

Mr. HICKS (interposing). You contemplate, then, doing away entirely with the necessity of a Member coming from the House Office Building to the House to vote, which will save at least four or five minutes?

Mr. HOWARD. Yes; absolutely. We could have a rule that, say, five minutes after the question has been put the ballot shall be closed.

Mr. HASTINGS. That would have to be by rule of the House?

Mr. HOWARD. Yes, sir. Of course, this system would not be worth a penny if we were going to allow 40 or 50 minutes for Members to come in and record their votes.

Mr. MILLER. Last year experiments, I understand, showed that 10 minutes should be the limit.

Mr. HOWARD. Yes, sir. Mr. Walsh, of New Jersey, who is an electrician and who was a Member of the last House, made a thorough investigation of an electrical system. I believe he was an expert electrician, and Mr. Walsh figured that at least 25 minutes on each roll call could be saved by this system.

Now, so far as this matter is concerned, I have given, of course, but little study to it.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you know anything about the cost of it?

Mr. HOWARD. I do not.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you know anything about the different devices that have been suggested for use by the House?

Mr. HOWARD. The only system that I know anything about is the one which has been suggested to Members of the House by Mr. Bobroff. I believe that experiments with it have shown that it is absolutely efficient and accurate and that it is easily understood. I refer to the system which has been presented to Members of the House in the old Ways and Means Committee room by Mr. Bobroff.

The CHAIRMAN. You mean the system which is here to-day?

Mr. HOWARD. Yes, sir; and that system, it occurs to me, would serve every purpose, and it would amount to a saving of days, if not weeks, during every session of Congress.

Mr. HICKS. Do you contemplate taking out the present seating arrangement and restoring the desks?

Mr. HOWARD. I do not know what would be best to do under those circumstances.

Mr. HASTINGS. Would not that be necessary with this device that you have here?

Mr. HOWARD. Well, if Members felt that they had to do their own work while they were on the floor of the House, if they had to do a great amount of writing by virtue of staying right on the floor within the sound of the gong, then, of course, we would have to have some different system than now exists.

The CHAIRMAN. There are two reasons which account for the fact that we have no quorum. One is the fact that desks have been taken out of the House of Representatives, and the other fact is that we have electric bells.

Mr. HOWARD. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Prior to the time of the installation of the present seating system, when every man had his own desk and his own seat, we had no electric bells, and there was a quorum on every important occasion. The question of no quorum was seldom, if ever, raised, and there was no occasion to raise it, because there was a quorum present.

Mr. HOWARD. That is true.

The CHAIRMAN. But getting back to the other thing, you realize, perhaps, as everybody else does, that it would be almost impossible to change the present system so as to avoid using the electric bells; we have got the electric bells and people are using them, and I suppose it would be an impossible thing to secure a majority vote in favor of doing away with the electric-bell system, and yet the electric-bell system has done more to disorganize the House than any one thing that ever happened.

Mr. HOWARD. I will say this, that in the last Congress I introduced a resolution to abolish the second roll call.

Mr. MILLER. What about the man whose name is at the first part of the alphabet?

Mr. HOWARD. The proposition was to serve the very purpose that this system is devised to serve. I can remember, and so can every other Member of the Sixty-second Congress, when we were having quite a number of fights on the floor, that points of no quorum would be made three or four or five times a day in order to assist in carrying on a filibuster. As a matter of fact, it would develop every time the point of no quorum was made that no quorum was present, and that necessitated calling the roll, and we would accomplish practically nothing that day. I admit that sometimes the power of the filibuster is a very valuable adjunct, especially to the minority, and I am willing to admit that it would probably keep a good many Members of the House from doing things during the sessions of the House that they are now doing, that is, in the way of office work. But we generally meet at 11 or 12 o'clock; that is the general rule during ordinary sessions of Congress. I do not know a body of men with whom I have ever come in contact who are harder workers than Members of Congress—it is absolutely necessary for them to keep steadily at work or get irretrievably behind.

The CHAIRMAN. What have you to say as to whether or not the system you suggest would preserve the rights of the minority at all times? As you know, one of the rights of the minority is the right of filibuster.

Mr. HOWARD. Yes; it is a right, in a sense, under parliamentary procedure, but at the same time it is a question whether that right is always exercised for the best interests of the country.

The CHAIRMAN. We know it is not, because a man who makes a point of order does it out of some pique.

Mr. HOWARD. Precisely.

The CHAIRMAN. It is not because of any public good that is to be served by it. Nearly every roll call that we have, every time a point of order is made, it is because some Member is a little bit piqued.

Mr. HOWARD. It is to force a compromise, as a rule.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. A man who wants to speak is not allowed to speak, and then he makes the House pay for it, and he can do it very readily.

Mr. HOWARD. That is true. However, the question simply resolves itself into this: That this committee present it to the House if they think it is worthy and say: Do we want to economize the time of Congress? If we do, something of this sort should be adopted. Since the reapportionment was made the membership of the House has increased, as you know, and the number will continue to increase as the country grows; if I live my allotted time I expect to see 600 Members on the floor of the House. That being so, we have got to get away from the antiquated system of roll call; we have got to have some system of recording the will of the House more rapidly than we have under the present system. There is no question about that, and it is a fact that now we can hardly attend, and we do not attend, to the small affairs of the Government as we should attend to them for the simple reason we have no time.



Mr. MILLER. What do you say about the constitutional provision as to certain classes of resolutions and bills or veto messages, that there shall be a roll call by the clerk, and the vote actually determined by yeas and nays?

Mr. HOWARD. Well, under those conditions, of course, we would have to comply with that provision.

Mr. HICKS. Just what do you refer to?

Mr. MILLER. You might have to have a roll call, for instance, under Article I, section 7, of the Constitution.

Mr. HICKS. But this system would record the vote.

Mr. MILLER. I have heard that point raised about this very matter.

The CHAIRMAN. That raises this question: What constitutes a roll call? Those who advocate that theory insist that it is not a roll call unless the name of the individual has been pronounced aloud and he has had an opportunity to reply, but I do not think that would be the construction of the courts. A roll call is the ascertainment for the record of how each individual desires his vote to be cast. It could very easily be handled under the rules, I suppose, by having the rules properly amended.

Mr. HOWARD. There is another phase right here that I would like to mention to this committee, because I know you gentlemen are experienced. There have been many bills passed by the House by viva voce on which I would like very much to have been recorded, in writing, if necessary. I would like to have shown how I felt about the matters and whether I was either in favor of or against them. I have been retarded in my zeal to be recorded for the simple reason that Members want to economize in time. But under this system, if we wanted to be recorded, so much time would not be taken. A man would say to himself: This is an important measure and I would like to have my people know exactly how I stand on the proposition. And if it would only take about five minutes most all of the Members would be willing to submit to a record vote.

Under this system, as it has been explained to me, not only can the roll call be recorded in five minutes but the operator of this machine can take a photograph of that roll call in 32 seconds, and he can make as many of them as he wants, and he can hand one to each Member if he wants it. Mr. South, who has had a great deal of experience in making up the Congressional Record, mentioned to me that a great saving could be made by these photographic records of the vote, which are made in 32 seconds.

So far as the technical construction of this machine is concerned, it is a wonderful machine—

Mr. HICKS (interposing). In what way did Mr. South suggest that a great saving could be made?

Mr. HOWARD. Mr. South knows something about making up the Record, and he mentioned something to me about it the other day, and I would be glad if you would let Mr. South make a statement, if he desires to do so, showing the practicability of this machine.

The CHAIRMAN. We will hear Mr. South after you finish your statement. Now, you fix the amount at \$125,000?

Mr. HOWARD. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Have you any information as to what it will probably cost?

Mr. HOWARD. Only what I have gotten from the gentleman who owns the machine.

The CHAIRMAN. Are you aware that Mr. Walsh, in presenting the matter in the last Congress, suggested that the device could be put in for \$25,000?

Mr. HOWARD. I am not aware of that; no. That is an opinion that I know nothing about, and I would rather have you hear from those who know.

Mr. MILLER. Is this the same device in which Mr. Walsh was interested last year?

Mr. HOWARD. No; it is an entirely different one.

Mr. MILLER. Is it patented?

Mr. HOWARD. Yes.

Mr. HICKS. Mr. Walsh's resolution appears on page 3 of the hearing of July 31, 1914, and the amount carried in the resolution is \$20,000.

The CHAIRMAN. You authorize, by this resolution, the purchase and installation of this device. You make that positive?

Mr. HOWARD. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. And you authorize a commission to be appointed to make a selection of the device?

Mr. HOWARD. Yes, sir.

Mr. HICKS. Of course if this device is adopted it means a change in the seating arrangement of the House, and it will have to be determined whether desks shall be put in. There are a lot of Members who have to have some place to do their writing, and if we could have a room somewhere on the same floor as the House chamber, where we could have little desks, it would be possible for us to carry on our correspondence, and that would obviate the necessity of having so much work done in the House Office Building.

Mr. HOWARD. If we could have some place adjacent to the Hall of the House where we could have our secretaries meet with us and where we could get out emergency matters, I think that would eliminate the necessity for desks on the floor of the House, except that there would have to be desks in the Speaker's lobby, or tables, as there are now, supplied with stationery and things of that sort for our convenience.

Mr. MILLER. That would necessitate a suboffice building, and we have not the room for it in the Capitol Building.

Mr. HOWARD. No; it would not mean that, because I never go to my office in the daytime. I have not been in my office a half dozen times since Christmas. I have my business systematized. I dictate all of my letters at night, they are written the next day, and I sign them at night. There is no necessity for my going to my office. I attend to my departmental work in the morning. But that is just 1 Member out of 100 and all of them could and would not do that.

The CHAIRMAN. A great many of the Members simply employ a stenographer here in Washington. They have them in their offices during the day and could not expect them to perform services at night. You use your secretary during the 24 hours at any time you choose, but you could not expect a stenographer employed at \$50 or \$60 a month to be on call at all hours, and you could not require such a stenographer to work at night.

Mr. HOWARD. That is true, and I admit the necessity of Members using their offices very largely.

The CHAIRMAN. Nearly every Member of Congress uses his office and you are considerably of an exception, I think.

Mr. HOWARD. Well, I have my stenographer live with me, and all of that, you know, helps. That is about all, gentlemen, that I have to say.

### STATEMENT OF MR. B. L. BOBROFF, OF MILWAUKEE, WIS.

The CHAIRMAN. What is your name?

Mr. BOBROFF. My name is B. L. Bobroff.

The CHAIRMAN. What is your business?

Mr. BOBROFF. Electrical and mechanical engineer.

The CHAIRMAN. Where do you live?

Mr. BOBROFF. Milwaukee, Wis.

The CHAIRMAN. How long have you been engaged in that business?

Mr. BOBROFF. About 16 years; since 1900.

The CHAIRMAN. Where did you obtain your education as an electrician?

Mr. BOBROFF. My mechanical education I obtained in Russia, the University of Russia, and my electrical training I obtained in this country. I attended the Lewis Institute at night for two years, and for four years I attended a school of engineering in Milwaukee. I have been working for 18 months on special work with the engineering staff of the University of Madison, for the Bureau of Efficiency and Economy, and I had charge of the water waste and electrolysis survey in the city of Milwaukee. For the last four years I have been engaged in my own business as an efficiency engineer.

The CHAIRMAN. Have you any people employed under you?

Mr. BOBROFF. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. How many?

Mr. BOBROFF. Four; sometimes five or more.

The CHAIRMAN. Are you an American citizen?

Mr. BOBROFF. Yes, sir; and I have always been since the expiration of the first six months after I came over here.

The CHAIRMAN. What do you mean by that?

Mr. BOBROFF. I mean that I obtained my first naturalization and citizenship papers six months after I came over here, and I have been a citizen now for 11 years.

The CHAIRMAN. When did you obtain your final papers?

Mr. BOBROFF. Four years afterwards.

The CHAIRMAN. Have you had any experience with voting devices for legislative bodies?

Mr. BOBROFF. I will say that I have made a study of the roll-call question, and, not only have I made a study of it from the surface, but I have made a thorough study of the roll-call question. I did that when I began to work on that problem of devising some means and ways whereby roll calls could be taken instantaneously instead of consuming as much time as it is doing to-day in legislative bodies.

The CHAIRMAN. Have you installed a device anywhere for carrying out your ideas?

Mr. BOBROFF. At the present time the Wisconsin State Legislature has adopted it. It adopted it at the last session, and we are installing it now.

The CHAIRMAN. But it has not yet been tested thoroughly?

Mr. BOBROFF. No, sir; except that I demonstrated it with several units. There were 17 members of the joint finance committee and 11 members of the judiciary committee, the committee which introduced the bill, and both committees unanimously voted to adopt it. I will say with reference to this device, that if one unit works, 1,000 units or an infinite number of units will work. They have no relationship between one another, but they are just as you see them there. Therefore, it does not make any difference whether you have one unit or a hundred units, or any number of units, they have got to work.

Mr. MILLER. Well, how many will you use in the Wisconsin Legislature?

Mr. BOBROFF. One hundred, exactly.

Mr. HICKS. Do you know of any other legislative bodies in which any other devices are in use for roll-call purposes?

Mr. BOBROFF. There is none in the United States.

Mr. HICKS. Of any manufacture?

Mr. BOBROFF. No, sir; there is none.

The CHAIRMAN. Are there any in use in any other countries?

Mr. BOBROFF. I have been trying to find out about that. Some people say that it is used in France, but I have never gotten to the point where I could get any definite information. However, I doubt it. It may be true, but this much I can say, that from the researches I have made in England and Germany I have not found anything. As a matter of fact, I have obtained patents in France. I have obtained basic patents on that principle in France and in Germany and in England, and if there had been any device along that line, they would not have granted me that patent. Therefore, I assume that there is none.

Mr. HASTINGS. When will the installation be completed in Wisconsin?

Mr. BOBROFF. We have until next December, but the entire proposition largely depends upon our getting some material which we have to obtain for that purpose. It has a good deal to do with the war. The gentlemen owning the concern from which we must obtain the material are very busy, and this takes a great deal of time. However, I contemplate that the thing will be ready in 120 days.

The CHAIRMAN. Suppose you explain in your own way what you will install on the floor of the House. Explain in your own way how you will install the device.

Mr. BOBROFF. Last year that resolution was introduced by Congressman Walsh, and you will see from the hearings held at that particular time that Mr. Walsh did not have anything definite with reference to the device. He assumed that some device could be gotten up and made to work. When I heard of that resolution I had been working for quite a number of years upon a device which had that very principle. I wrote on here, and it was suggested in reply that I come on and show what I had. When I came here some suggestions were made by Mr. Clark, Mr. Underwood, and some other gentlemen. I think the chairman also made some suggestions as to the purpose it would serve, and as to what would be demanded of me if I should want to install it in a legislative body. I have incorporated all of it here, I think. I take as a basis the vacant panels adjacent to the Speaker's desk. There is a vacant panel on the Democratic side and a vacant panel on the Republican side of the House. I have to

provide for 450 or 460 names. That space, I think, is about 10 feet by 9 feet, or something like it, and I have divided it into so many units. Then I have designed a letter of that size [indicating], so that you would be able to see it from every part of the Hall. I have put it up there. Mr. South helped me at that time to put it up in order that we might see just what was the proper size. It worked out most satisfactorily. It is just as you see it there, and if you should have 435 or 450 names, you could put it in that space there.

Mr. HICKS. How much would that be—half of it?

Mr. BOBROFF. No, sir; all of it. It is on either side. Then, I contemplate this, putting one board on the Democratic side of the House and one board on the Republican side of the House, so they can all see it. They would be duplicates, and whatever there is on one side should be on the other side. Instantly everybody can see how each individual Member has voted.

Mr. HOWARD. That means you would have 870 units?

Mr. BOBROFF. Substantially 900 units.

Mr. HOWARD. That, of course, would be one of the elements of cost, because each part is a separate and distinct unit, with each unit performing the same function.

Mr. HICKS. Does that bring it up high enough?

Mr. SOUTH. Yes, sir.

Mr. BOBROFF. Some objections were made to the effect that you have no desks. I will explain that, because I want to go into every detail, so far as the installation is concerned, and to show you how it will be possible to make it absolutely practical. It is not necessary to have any desks. You can put this right on a chair, or next to a chair, or at any convenient place. It would, of course, necessitate the numbering of the chairs, but they are numbered already. Each individual Member would draw a seat number. Then there might come up the question that they would have to go to their seats in order to vote, but I contemplate, in order to make it still more convenient, to have other voting stations at convenient places in the Hall. There might be six or eight, and there is ample space in which to put them. For instance, you might locate some in the Hall next to the cloakroom on the Democratic side and Republican side. If you wanted to vote there you could take out your key, unlock it, press the button, and vote.

Mr. MILLER. Would you provide there a voting place for every Member of the House?

Mr. BOBROFF. There would be so many stations provided on the Republican side, and likewise so many on the Democratic side.

Mr. MILLER. That, of course, would increase the cost and necessitate a place for each Member at these substations?

Mr. BOBROFF. Yes, sir; but it would make it more convenient. It is like electric lights. When electric lights came into use they were more expensive than gaslights, and gaslights were more expensive than candlelight, but we would not want to go back to candlelight. This, of course, is a matter of time saving and convenience, and it must actually be charged up to cost plus the actual cost of installation. The cost, of course, increases as you increase the accommodations in this respect.

The CHAIRMAN. If you provide two voting places, one on the desks and one for use at other places in the Hall, would the cost be twice as much?

Mr. BOBROFF. No, sir. I figure it this way: If that system goes in here, it has got to be the very best in America, and the very best that can be made. That is my idea, and I know if I get this device in here, my record is made. I would not have it anything else but the very best, and I have figured it out so as to make the thing absolutely complete in every detail.

Mr. HICKS. You have some method, I suppose, by which the Clerk can vote a Member's name?

Mr. BOBROFF. No, sir.

Mr. HICKS. Why not? Suppose Mr. Miller, Mr. Howard, and I should come up here and forget our keys, and a roll call should take place, could we not get the Clerk and ask him to vote for us?

Mr. BOBROFF. No, sir; the Clerk would give you a duplicate key.

Mr. HICKS. A master key?

Mr. BOBROFF. No, sir; a duplicate key. With a master key, voting could be done from any station; but there would be no chance for any unauthorized voting with a duplicate key. If you have a duplicate key, that will eliminate every possible difficulty.

Mr. HICKS. What arrangement do you provide for keeping the duplicate keys?

Mr. BOBROFF. The Clerk has the duplicate keys.

Mr. HOWARD. He keeps the duplicate keys under lock and key?

Mr. BOBROFF. Yes, sir.

Mr. HOWARD. He keeps that key and would give it to you when necessary?

Mr. BOBROFF. Yes, sir.

Mr. MILLER. Do you care to tell us what arrangements were made for the Wisconsin Legislature? Do they have subvoting stations?

Mr. BOBROFF. No, sir; they have desks there, and really they do not give them any time on a call of the roll unless it is a call of the house. Then they send for them. Otherwise they vote if they are there and they have not made any provision for voting away from the desks.

Mr. MILLER. Do you have this arrangement (the recording panel) in the hall there?

Mr. BOBROFF. Yes, sir; this arrangement has been placed in the center of the gallery, at a place where it was very convenient for us, and it reduced the cost greatly.

Mr. MILLER. Do you care to tell what was the cost of the installation in the Wisconsin Legislature?

Mr. BOBROFF. Yes, sir. I will show you a little drawing I have here.

The CHAIRMAN. Describe that so the reporter can make it clear in the hearings.

Mr. BOBROFF. A board has been placed in the center of the gallery. The ornamental railing has been cut out, and an ornamental bronze frame has been substituted. You can see a part of the ornamental work here [indicating]. We have nothing to do with any of the changes whatsoever. The changes in the gallery, the changes in the structure, the ornamental frame, the iron frame, and all of the necessary reconstruction work in the building were done by the Wisconsin commission that has charge of the construction of the capitol building. We put in our units in the right place for them, and we get from them \$11,600 for 100 units, \$106 per unit. Now, we knew

when we started on that job that we would not make any money, and the reason for doing that was simply to prove conclusively the practicability of the device, as would be done in any other business proposition. That is the only reason why we are installing 100 units there for \$11,600. Any other State legislature of that size or number would have to pay not less than \$25,000. By adding up the cost of the ornamental work, the reconstruction work, and everything else, the cost there will amount to \$16,000 or \$17,000, or about \$170 per unit. That will be about the actual cost of installing the system with 100 names. Here I contemplate that all the requirements, and to do all the reconstruction work necessary, and to do all the necessary ornamental work to beautify and make it in harmony with the Chamber would be included in this \$125,000.

Mr. MILLER. There would have to be some people here to take care of it. Would we have to employ some electricians trained in the workings of this system?

Mr. BOBROFF. No, sir; there are a great number of electricians employed here. The device in itself is very durable, and it will require very little attention. Just to give you an idea of how little attention it will require I will say that this machine you see before you has made approximately 90,000 roll calls. Now, how much time do you suppose it would require for Congress to take 90,000 roll calls? There would not be that many in 100 years, at least, or probably in 200 years. Take, for instance, the Sixty-second Congress, which was the longest Congress so far as roll calls are concerned, and you will see that that machine can do 200 years' work. I know positively that it never went wrong. There is no question but that the maintenance part of it would be a very small matter annually.

The CHAIRMAN. Would it not be necessary to have a good practical electrician to look after that device?

Mr. BOBROFF. No, sir.

Mr. SOUTH. There are a half a dozen men in the building who could do it.

Mr. BOBROFF. They have a good many men here, and I know they are very capable. They are already here.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you think that Mr. Woods's force is sufficiently well posted in this kind of work to make any repairs that would be necessary to be made on this device?

Mr. BOBROFF. You could pick any man you want for that. You could take a man without any electrical training, and let me have him just one week and I will make an expert of that man on that particular device.

Mr. HASTINGS. Have you thought about the cost of changing the names when the membership of the House changes?

Mr. BOBROFF. Yes, sir; and I will show you how that is done. Suppose, for instance, Mr. Fitzgerald is defeated; you simply take this out [indicating], erase this name [indicating], and print the other name on it. You would put the same plates back in its proper position.

Mr. SOUTH. And give the new man his key.

Mr. BOBROFF. Yes, sir; that is all there is to it.

Mr. HOWARD. The new man would come in and get that key?

Mr. BOBROFF. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Is it your idea to have the list of names appear in alphabetical order, or should they appear in the order of the States?

Mr. BOBROFF. I would suggest that it would be best to have them appear by States.

The CHAIRMAN. Then, when the Member from the first district goes out, all that is necessary is to take off the name "James T. Lloyd" and put in the name of his successor.

Mr. BOBROFF. Yes, sir; that is why I suggest it be arranged by States.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there any further explanation you wish to make about it?

Mr. HOWARD. Is this apparatus connected up now?

Mr. BOBROFF. I do not know whether it is or not. I doubt it; I did not have time enough to test it out.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there any other further explanation you desire to make?

Mr. BOBROFF. One thing I want to say is this: I want to go into the hearing of last year of Mr. Walsh for the reason that I want to point out to you a difference in the conditions existing at that time and now. They did not provide for anything specific or definite, and the entire proposition at that time was nothing but a guess. When the chairman asked Mr. Walsh, "Your resolution does not specifically provide for anything at all?" Mr. Walsh answered, "No, sir." Further, when Mr. Ten Eyck stated that Mr. Walsh did not provide for making changes in votes, Mr. Walsh replied that "This could be done and that it will have to be done just as it is now, and that there is not any electrical way by which it could be done, and that the mistakes would have to be corrected when it is taken off the record." Then Mr. Ten Eyck pointed out at that time that Mr. Walsh did not provide in any way whereby mistakes could be detected and corrected by the Member; that under his outline each Member would have four buttons to manipulate and many mistakes would be sure to happen. All this I simply point out to prove my contention that Mr. Walsh's statement as to the cost of installing an electrical voting system could not be taken authoritatively.

I am proving to you conclusively that my system of voting is absolutely complete in every detail. It provides not only the means of taking a roll call instantaneously but it also adds and records the vote of every member and shows just how he voted on a question; it also provides the means whereby a Member can correct his vote if he happens to change his mind, or if he makes a mistake. This is done automatically; it is done just as soon as the Member touches the button which is provided for that purpose. I want to emphasize this particular point, because Mr. Walsh stated before your committee that this could not be done.

Further, when a Member is voting he can see from his voting place how he voted, and the same vote will duplicate itself on a large board adjacent to his name, where everyone else can see. In short, this system is provided with all the means that practical legislation can demand.

Taking the statement of Mr. Underwood that this system of voting would save at least \$50,000 a year in light, heat, telephone and telegraph service, I might add that there are other important savings which would be made by the means of this system, namely, the salary



of the monthly employees, and printing the roll calls, etc., which would be greatly reduced. In other words, this system would pay for itself in one year. Also the convenience to the Members must be considered. Taking the Sixty-second Congress as a demonstration, where 55 legislative days were spent in calling the roll, with this system in existence 50 out of the 55 could have been saved, or it would have been possible for you to adjourn two months sooner. Therefore, as I say, you can not take the conditions existing at the time of Mr. Walsh's presentation of this matter as a basis for this. In the first place, Mr. Walsh, when he introduced that resolution, positively stated that he did not have anything definite, and he stated on page 12 of this hearing, "If it is not a good thing you are going to lose \$20,000." That is what Mr. Walsh said. We might know the exact cost or approximately the exact cost of our system with this exception: We know that since last year material has increased in cost from 100 to 500 per cent. In this case, however, we did not multiply this price by four or five hundred per cent, but we will have a very small margin of profit on that device.

Mr. MILLER. Of course, the question of price will come up in the discussion of this matter. Suppose you reduce the number of units to one having only one panel and no substations for voting. Would that considerably change the price named in the Howard resolution?

Mr. BOBROFF. It would, and that is the reason I think the best way to do it is to provide for all the accommodations necessary, and leave it to a commission.

Mr. MILLER. I want to know how much it would reduce the price.

Mr. BOBROFF. Yes, sir; it would reduce it.

Mr. MILLER. But you can not say off-hand how much?

Mr. BOBROFF. No, sir; but it would reduce it very considerably. Therefore, I think the best way to do would be to leave it to a commission to decide. If the commission has had ample experience along legislative lines, they can determine what is best, so far as actual installation is concerned. I personally would submit three different plans, and let them make their own choice about it.

Mr. HICKS. How much space would you want for the 450 units?

Mr. BOBROFF. Ninety square feet would be ample room.

The CHAIRMAN. Can you say what material would go in to the installation?

Mr. BOBROFF. Taking, the Wisconsin Legislature installation as a basis, according to the way I figured it out, in order to make it right, there would be in different sized wires approximately 70 miles or about 369,600 feet.

The CHAIRMAN. What kind of wire?

Mr. BOBROFF. Different kinds of wire.

The CHAIRMAN. How much of it would be copper wire?

Mr. BOBROFF. All of it would be copper wire.

Mr. SOUTH. And it would be insulated like this [indicating].

The CHAIRMAN. All of it would be insulated?

Mr. BOBROFF. Yes, sir; and in conduits. All of that wire would be in conduits. Not a single wire could be seen.

The CHAIRMAN. What change has there been in the price of copper recently?

Mr. BOBROFF. I can not say what the change has been recently.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, within the last two years?

Mr. BOBROFF. I should say that the price has doubled, at least, if not more than doubled.

The CHAIRMAN. Have there been any objections made to this device? What objections have been urged to it?

Mr. BOBROFF. I have not heard of any objections to it.

Mr. MILLER. Was there any opposition to the adoption of the device in the Wisconsin Legislature?

Mr. BOBROFF. The bill passed by a vote of 51 to 23, and each one of the 23 voted against it simply because they had pledged themselves not to make any new appropriations that year, and this was the only new appropriation passed by the Wisconsin Legislature at that time. That is the only reason they gave for voting against it that I know of.

The CHAIRMAN. What I was trying to get at was to know the answer to the objections that may have been urged against the device.

Mr. BOBROFF. I have not heard of any objection. I think one member told me that the voting was too fast now. I presume that objection was that if they voted any faster they would flood the country with legislation. Now, I am glad that I have the opportunity to answer that question, and the answer is that as long as the legislative bodies are in session, they will have that long to pass legislation, and the quicker they get through and adjourn, the less chance there will be for passing legislation that may not be desirable. It will enable them to get through quicker by this system.

Mr. MILLER. Is it a corporation that owns the patent?

Mr. BOBROFF. It is a corporation at the present time. Gentlemen, I am taking the facts from this report, and I find it stated that it consumes approximately 45 minutes to call the roll. Now, this device will enable you to take the roll call at any speed you may desire. It enables you to take the roll call at any speed that you may determine is the proper speed.

The CHAIRMAN. Suppose you wanted to take it in two minutes?

Mr. BOBROFF. You could take it in 34 seconds.

The CHAIRMAN. Then, how long would you wait before taking the second roll call?

Mr. BOBROFF. Thirty-four seconds after the first vote. You can make a permanent record there, and can see how the vote has been recorded, and then take the second vote.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you think it would be possible to take 25 votes in 75 minutes, one right after the other, and announce each vote?

Mr. BOBROFF. Yes, sir; just as quick as they can talk; if they can talk as fast as I can, they could.

Mr. MILLER. This takes a copy of the roll call, and you make from it afterwards the copy for the records?

Mr. BOBROFF. Yes, sir.

Mr. MILLER. It registers at the Speaker's desk the result of the vote?

Mr. BOBROFF. Yes, sir; it registers the result of the vote at the Speaker's desk. Then you can make a change in your vote. Suppose, for instance, you vote aye on a question, and then change your mind: and want to vote no. At the present time you have to wait until the roll call is taken before changing your vote, and then ask permission to change your vote. By means of this system, however, you are independent of that. If you make a mistake, you can change it from one column to the other. It does not make any record what-

soever until the vote is finally closed, and then it makes the permanent record showing how each individual Member voted. At the present time, if you come in half a minute late, it is necessary for you to wait until the next roll call, or if you come in too soon, you have to wait until your name is reached; but by means of this system it is possible for you or any individual Member to come in at any time and press the button and vote. Then, when you have voted you can go away.

The CHAIRMAN. Suppose I come in and want to know, for instance, how Mr. Mann has voted?

Mr. BOBROFF. You can look at the board and see how he voted.

Mr. HICKS. How do you change the number of the bill?

Mr. BOBROFF. The number of the bill or resolution is permanent, but these figures [indicating] are slidable. We have a duplicate set of letters and numbers.

Mr. HICKS. You have a combination of numbers?

Mr. BOBROFF. Yes, sir. This is simply a demonstration of it. The entire proposition is made up of such a combination that you can quickly change the numbers.

(Thereupon, the committee proceeded to the consideration of other business, after which it adjourned.)

#### COMMITTEE ON ACCOUNTS,

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

*Thursday, May 25, 1916.*

The committee this day met, Hon. James T. Lloyd (chairman) presiding.

Mr. LLOYD. The committee will come to order. Mr. Garner, will you please state to the committee your views with reference to a voting device for the House of Representatives?

#### STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN N. GARNER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS.

Mr. GARNER. Mr. Chairman, at your suggestion I came by this morning to give the committee my views as to the wisdom of adopting this system—

The CHAIRMAN (interposing). Or a system?

Mr. GARNER. Yes; a system similar to this; something that will facilitate the calling of the roll. I believe this is the system which has been on exhibition in the Ways and Means Committee room for some time. I have gone there once or twice and had this gentleman, I think, explain its workings to me. I do not know whether this is the best system or not, but I do want to speak just a word in behalf of some system that will facilitate getting record votes in the House. Two policies, I think, should be paramount in adopting any rules of the House of Representatives or any method by which to accomplish those two policies. One is the facilitation of business and the other is giving the minority an opportunity to be heard and to put the majority on record whenever it is desired. Those two propositions,

it occurs to me, almost solve the problem of legislation, and this system helps in both directions. I would not advocate this or any other device to facilitate the transaction of business in the House if it took away from the minority any right whatever that it now has. But this device will not take away from the minority either an opportunity to be heard or an opportunity to secure a record vote. As a matter of fact, it will add to the opportunity of the minority to secure a record vote on many things on which they can not now secure such a vote, because it takes too much time.

Mr. MILLER. Does that mean that the rules might be changed so that we could get a record vote in the Committee of the Whole?

Mr. GARNER. That is a matter, of course, that will be worked out later on. It was not my intention to discuss that phase of it, but if such a scheme could be worked out I would be mighty glad to see it adopted, because I have been here long enough to see legislation put on bills in the Committee of the Whole that the majority of the House was not in favor of, but no record vote could be demanded. If you could get a record vote in the Committee of the Whole you would add one more feature that would be anything but detrimental and you would accomplish something that is now detrimental in the consideration of measures in the Committee of the Whole, to wit, keeping a quorum.

Mr. PARK. Did I understand you to say you would take out the bells?

Mr. GARNER. Yes; I would not give the Members an opportunity to know when a roll was going to be called.

Mr. PARK. I am not in favor of that.

Mr. GARNER. I know you are not, but I am. I am in favor of some method which will keep Members on the floor of the House of Representatives, and if those bells were taken out the opportunity to know when there was a roll call would be taken away and the Members would be compelled to stay there.

Mr. EDWARDS. As a matter of fact, you could keep the bells in, could you not?

Mr. GARNER. Oh, yes; but I do not want to discuss that feature of it. I want to call the attention of the committee to the advantage of facilitating roll calls in the House, both to the majority and to the minority, and I do not want to discuss the matter from any other standpoint. I have mentioned these other matters because some of the gentlemen have suggested them. It may be said that such a system would operate against the rights of the minority, but I do not think that is so. The object of the majority is to facilitate the passage of bills and see to the carrying out of its program. The object of the minority is to criticize, if it deems proper, the majority's program, and to get record votes on such measures as it deems advisable. It occurs to me that this is advantageous to the majority in carrying out its program and it is advantageous to the minority in getting a larger number of record votes on any proposition it desires. I believe it is good both for the minority and for the majority to adopt some system similar to this.

Mr. MILLER. You say it would keep people on the floor more than the present system does?

Mr. GARNER. I do not mean that this particular system would; no.

Mr. MILLER. I mean, suppose a large number of the Members were on the floor would it not be difficult to keep order? Would not pandemonium reign as it does many times under the present system?

Mr. GARNER. Probably, but this would not necessarily make any change with reference to staying on the floor of the House, because even with this system the bells would ring and Members would be given an opportunity to come to the House from the Office Building the same as now.

Mr. KXOP. The Members would be allowed a certain length of time to get to the House?

Mr. GARNER. Yes, sir. It could be tested in order to ascertain how long it should take for the Members to come from the Office Building to answer a roll call. This system is to facilitate the transaction of business on the floor of the House, and would in no degree, as I see it, take away from the minority its two paramount purposes, to wit, the criticism of the majority and putting them on record with reference to certain measures.

Mr. KXOP. Do you think it would be a violation of the Constitution to adopt this plan?

Mr. GARNER. I had not thought about that phase of it, but I do not see just how it could.

Mr. KXOP. Where the Constitution provides for a ye-a-and-nay vote—

Mr. GARNER (interposing). That would be registered.

Mr. KXOP (continuing). It is contemplated that the name of each Member shall be called and that each Member shall answer ye-a or nay.

Mr. GARNER. I can hardly think that would be the construction by the Supreme Court. I imagine the Supreme Court would consider the result, and if the journal showed it was a ye-a-and-nay vote, that there were so many ye-as and so many nays, that the Supreme Court would not go back of those votes to ascertain whether the Members voted by answering to their names or by registering through a device of this kind. I hardly think the Supreme Court would go back of the journal to ascertain just whether a man's voice registered his vote or whether his thumb registered his vote. I had not thought about that phase of it.

Mr. KXOP. I do not think so either, and I just asked that question to get your opinion about it.

Mr. GARNER. I think that is about all I wish to say. I came by this morning at the suggestion of Mr. Lloyd to say what has occurred to my mind as the advantage of this system in facilitating business on the part of the majority and giving the minority equal opportunity to be heard and a greater opportunity to put the majority on record more often on important measures.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Garrett has given this proposition a great deal of attention and I am anxious that he shall be heard.

#### STATEMENT OF HON. FINIS J. GARRETT, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TENNESSEE.

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Chairman, some years ago I presented a resolution to provide for an investigation into the feasibility of installing a mechanical device for voting. That resolution was referred to the Committee on Rules. The Committee on Rules appointed a sub-committee that investigated the matter in connection with the

members of the Committee on Accounts. I think it reported favorably. I believe it is very desirable that a system of this sort should be adopted. Just what particular device should be adopted I do not know. Any system that is adopted would be an experiment in the beginning and it would have to be gradually worked out to final perfection.

We are creatures of habit. Before the Office Building was constructed the constant attendance of Members in the House was much larger than it has ever been since. Many have fallen into the habit of staying in their offices until the bells ring and then coming across to vote. That is not a desirable practice. The adoption of a system of electric voting would, after it was practiced for a little while, shorten the daily sessions of the House and Members would conform themselves to the practice. They would do their departmental work and attend to their correspondence—

Mr. PARK (interposing). Will you permit a question right there?

Mr. GARRETT. Certainly.

Mr. PARK. How do you figure it would shorten the daily sessions of the House? How can you figure that out?

Mr. GARRETT. It would do it because the necessity for it would exist. We all have so much departmental work to do and we all have so much correspondence to take care of. A device by which Members could vote immediately would, I suppose, cut out at least one-third of the time that is used in the consideration of measures on the floor. It would be a revolutionary proceeding but it would lead to good results. The gentleman from Delaware, Mr. Miller, suggested a matter to Mr. Garner a few moments ago—that is, whether it would, as I understood it, cut out teller votes.

Mr. MILLER. No. Mr. Garner was saying that we might have record votes on a greater number of measures and I asked him whether there would be a change in the rules so that there could be roll-call votes in Committee of the Whole, whether that might be possible.

Mr. GARRETT. Personally, I have not the slightest doubt but that would be and should be the ultimate result.

Mr. MILLER. Do you think that it is always desirable—to be perfectly frank about it—to have 200 or 300 Members on the floor when we are considering a bill like the Oregon California Railroad bill when there were only about 50 men directly interested on the floor and a hundred or more Members waiting for a vote and, of course, engaging in conversation, so that there would be a great deal of confusion if more Members were present?

Mr. GARRETT. That is under the system of voting which we have now. I think under a mechanical device voting system, where one is expecting a vote every minute, one would find better order in the House and would find that Members would be much more quiet.

The CHAIRMAN. Carrying out that thought, is it not true that we had much better order under the old system, when we had a full attendance, than we have now?

Mr. GARRETT. That was true before the House Office Building was constructed and when Members were in almost constant attendance.

Mr. REILLY. Was not that true because of the fact that the Members were attending to some business at their desks?

Mr. GARRETT. Perhaps that may be true——

Mr. REILLY. You do not think you could keep order if 435 Members were in attendance all the time?

Mr. GARRETT. Well, I think so, when they went there for business. Of course there would be times of passion and riot; that will always occur, but as a rule I believe the order would always be better with a full attendance.

Mr. MILLER. When a point of no quorum is made the Members are assembling for some time, and when the doors are opened we go right on with the bill that we were considering when the point of no quorum was made, and you know how difficult it is for the chairman or Speaker to get order for some minutes. Then when order is restored the Members who are not directly interested in the matter under consideration retire to the cloakrooms or go out into the hall, and only those who are directly interested stay on the floor, possibly 25 or 50.

Mr. GARRETT. You are talking about the present system, and that, of course, is true, as we all know. But what I undertake to maintain is that the adoption of a mechanical voting device will change the entire system.

Mr. MILLER. Would it shorten the talk?

Mr. GARRETT. And we will soon conform ourselves to that habit.

Mr. MILLER. Do you think it would shorten debate and talk on measures?

Mr. GARRETT. I do not know. Of course, a mechanical voting device would not have anything to do with the question of debate.

Mr. MILLER. How would it change the system of debate? Would not the debates be just as long between roll calls and votes?

Mr. GARRETT. I think it will result in the adoption of rules which will not allow of that lapse of time.

Mr. HASTINGS. Do you not think that if we were to adopt this voting device and all of the Members were compelled to stay on the floor of the House, that there would always be some of us who would object to granting unanimous consent for extended debate? When there are only 15 or 20 Members on the floor, on either side of the aisle, there is not so much objection to unanimous consent, whereas if we were all on the floor of the House and we were required to remain there you would always find some one who would object to granting unanimous consent, and I think that would have a tendency to cut down the length of the debates.

Mr. GARRETT. Perhaps, but I think it probably would have a tendency to bring about more liberal debate and more thoughtful consideration and attention. I think it would cause Members to give more attention to debate as it goes on. I do not think it would necessarily affect the question of debate or the time of debate, but I do think, measuring it by hours and taking the session as a whole, that the same business could be done with probably more liberal debate in two-thirds the number of hours if some sort of practical mechanical voting device were adopted.

Mr. KXOP. On the question of order, if we were to vote on this machine do you not think that every Member, knowing he was to make a record vote, would probably pay more attention to what is going on in the House?

Mr. GARRETT. Very decidedly so.

Mr. KXOP. And I think that would result in having better order.

Mr. GARRETT. Decidedly so. I do not think there is any question about the ability of somebody to get up a mechanical device that will accomplish that end. Of course, if such device is adopted the rules will have to be so written as to conform to its use.

Mr. Edison, I think, in 1867—as far back as that—invented some sort of electric voting device which, by the way, I think, is in use—although possibly not his invention—in the French Parliament. I am not sure, but I think there is a voting device used in the House in New York State.

Mr. KONOP. Such a device is being used in Wisconsin.

Mr. BOBROFF. They have no device in New York now but they have such a device under consideration at the present time, because I have taken up the matter with a few Members there.

Mr. GARRETT. I had the impression that possibly New York had adopted it some years ago, but I suppose I am mistaken.

Mr. MILLER. I have observed that you, as chairman of the Committee of the Whole, have a hard time to get order even when there are a few members present. You have had considerable experience as chairman of the Committee of the Whole, and I would like to ask you whether you think you would be helped by having 300 or 400 Members on the floor and whether you would not have greater difficulty in keeping order?

Mr. GARRETT. I do not think numbers would hurt any. The more attendance, as a rule, the better the order.

Mr. MILLER. I know; but would we be the gainer by it?

Mr. GARRETT. You mean in the matter of keeping order?

Mr. MILLER. Yes. If a greater number of Members were compelled to stay on the floor under this proposed system, can you not imagine the great amount of talk that would be going on all the time among the Members?

Mr. GARRETT. Yes; I can imagine that, and it does not take a very vivid imagination to imagine what might go on. But my thought about it, Mr. Miller, is that if the Members knew they were going to have to vote say within five minutes or within 10 minutes on even the question of closing debate, or on any one of the numerous questions that arise, that there really would result better order. Of course, that is a guess.

Mr. MILLER. I am asking for your opinion because you have had so much experience as chairman of the Committee of the Whole.

Mr. GARRETT. As I stated in the beginning, we are creatures of habit, and we have habituated ourselves to the practices under the present system of voting; when we have a new system we will habituate ourselves to that practice also. It seems to me that it is very desirable, and if I may venture this further statement, I think that the adoption of this system would lead in the end, and very quickly, to the abolishment of teller votes in Committee of the Whole and that there would be record votes in the Committee of the Whole. I think that is very desirable. The Senate of the United States does not have any teller votes. Whenever they vote they go on record.

Mr. REILLY. What progress would you make if you had to stop every little while and take a 10-minute record vote?

Mr. GARRETT. You need not take a 10-minute record vote under a mechanical voting device system; you can get it in two minutes or less—at least I understand from electricians that such is possible.



Mr. REILLY. If you are going to allow a certain length of time for a man to come over to the House to answer a roll call under this system it seems to me you ought to give him the same right in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. GARRETT. I want to state to you that if a satisfactory electrical voting system should be adopted and I should have anything to do with the drafting of a rule to conform to that system I would not favor giving ten minutes to Members to get there. The main thing which I think can be accomplished by the adoption of an electric voting system is the saving of time. If you are going to give Members time to get there I do not know but that the present personal voice system might just as well remain as any other.

Mr. REILLY. You would always save from 20 to 35 minutes.

Mr. GARRETT. But I do not think that is so very important.

Mr. LENROOT. Even if you gave them 10 minutes in the House there would be no occasion for giving them any time in the Committee of the Whole except the necessary time to vote.

Mr. GARRETT. That is all, of course.

Mr. REILLY. But you would make a record vote, and that would take time?

Mr. GARRETT. When a point of no quorum is made, of course, there is no way, and ought not to be any way, of getting around the constitutional provision. You must wait, and ought to wait, until a quorum is found; but I think that one of the rules that should be adopted in connection with an electrical voting device would be one to provide that the first vote should be shown and should appear in the Record, showing who was there on that first vote when the point of no quorum was made.

The CHAIRMAN. Showing who was present?

Mr. GARRETT. Yes, sir; and who was not present at the time. That is a very rigid proposition, of course, but I think it is a rule that should be made.

The CHAIRMAN. Is it not your opinion that one of the greatest evils to-day is that we are not a deliberative body, and that especially when we are in Committee of the Whole we vote as somebody else votes? We rush in from our offices, and when I go in on the floor I look over to see how Mr. Kitchin is going to vote or somebody else is going to vote, and Mr. Lenroot will look to ascertain how Mr. Stafford is going to vote, Mr. Mann, or somebody else. We simply vote in accordance with what seems to be the party alignment. That is a misfortune. Congress ought to be a deliberative body and we ought to know why we vote on every matter. There is this misfortune at the present time, that you are not voting your convictions; you are not voting because of any knowledge of the matter that is before the House.

Mr. GARRETT. That is in a measure true and, if I may say it, it is almost unavoidable under present practices. I do not see how you can change that under our present system.

Mr. LENROOT. That condition would be changed to a very large extent if the Members were present and heard the discussion.

Mr. GARRETT. Precisely, and my contention is that the adoption of a mechanical voting device will cause Members to be present if the rules are written in the right way to work with such device. It was upon that theory that I introduced the resolution some years ago. I

did not follow it up closely. Mr. Walsh, of New Jersey, was very much interested in it, and as he had more time to devote to it than I had I turned the matter over to him, so far as the resolution was concerned, but I have never lost interest in it. So far as the constitutional question is concerned I do not think there is the slightest trouble about that. I really believe that this committee would render a great public service by the adoption and development of some electrical voting device.

The CHAIRMAN. We are very much obliged to you, Mr. Garrett. Mr. Lenroot, we will be very glad to hear from you about this device, as I believe you have given it some consideration.

**STATEMENT OF HON. IRVINE L. LENROOT, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WISCONSIN.**

Mr. LENROOT. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, I do not think I have anything to say other than to indorse everything that Mr. Garrett has said. I think from every possible standpoint, assuming that we have a successful device, it ought to be adopted. Emphasizing what Mr. Garrett has said, I believe it will tend to keep Members on the floor, hear the discussions, and vote intelligently. In addition to that it is going to be a great saving in time to Members, assuming that we give them time to get over, when we are in the House, from their offices. Now, it consumes at least a half hour for a Member to wait for his opportunity to vote, and there is nothing done during those 35 minutes except that particular roll call. It would tend to keep Members on the floor, and if a record vote were provided in Committee of the Whole it would keep Members there, and instead of being the body which we are so largely now, as you have said, Mr. Chairman, we would become more of a deliberative body and the Members would be on the floor in Committee of the Whole. Instead of flocking in to find out how the leader on their side votes Members would hear the discussions and vote intelligently upon the merits of a measure to a much greater degree than they do to-day.

With reference to this particular device, I never met the gentleman until the other day, when I went into the committee room of the Committee on Ways and Means and saw this machine demonstrated. I was perfectly amazed with what is accomplished by the machine. In discussing the matter with him I suggested that the House of Representatives would not, of course, want to buy an experiment, but that they would want a successful device. He stated that if his device were accepted he would be willing to put up any bond that was necessary in order to enable the House to satisfy itself of the absolute success of the machine.

The CHAIRMAN. The resolution does not commit us to any particular machine.

Mr. LENROOT. No; I understand that, and I am speaking of any machine that may be tried. Of course, we would not want to spend \$40,000 or \$50,000 on an experiment, and it seems to me we could easily protect ourselves in that way, namely, install the machine and demonstrate its absolute success before the Government spent a single dollar on it. That, I think, should be the course which should be pursued.

Mr. KONOP. Do you not think it is a fact that if every Member knew he was to be recorded on a proposition that it would have a tendency to keep better order than we have now, even with a small number present?

Mr. LENROOT. I certainly do. As to the matter of order, it has been my observation always that there is better order with 200 or 300 Members in the House following a discussion, because there is to be a vote very shortly on the proposition under consideration, than when there are only 50 Members in the House and no record vote to be made.

I do not think I have anything further to say, except to most heartily indorse everything Mr. Garrett has said.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Stafford, we will be glad to hear from you.

**STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM H. STAFFORD, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WISCONSIN.**

Mr. STAFFORD. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, when this question was first presented to the Congress a few years ago I refrained from expressing my position in advocacy of it because I realized that there were some practical legislative questions that had to be considered before it could get, as I considered, the favorable indorsement of the Members of the House.

With the House Office Building as an institution I think the Members will always, unless some question of moment is under consideration, utilize their offices for their individual work. However, I think that with the inauguration of this system and by a provision in the rules, which is entirely compatible with existing conditions, permitting Members 10 minutes to get to the House after the first demand for a roll call has been made, that you will save from 25 minutes to a half hour in the time of the Members and in the time of the House. A few of us remember when the House was only 356, then 391, and now 435, and the present membership is likely to grow. With the addition of Members more and more time will be consumed, as Mr. Lenroot has pointed out, in waiting for our names to be called—a pure waste of time. If it were known that this, or a similar device, had been adopted, enabling the Members to have sufficient time to come from their offices, you would save one-half hour of valuable time to every individual Member.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. On every roll call?

Mr. STAFFORD. Yes. At the present time I do not wish to launch into a discussion of the revision of the rules as far as the Committee of the Whole is concerned. That is not the question before this committee.

The CHAIRMAN. We have nothing to do with that.

Mr. STAFFORD. It is not up to the Committee on Rules. It is a question whether or not we can adopt any device which will save the time of the 435 Members without infringing upon the privileges and rights of the majority, the minority, or the individual Members. I have thought over this a great deal and I see that a rule could be adopted allowing 10 minutes—a sufficient time—for a Member to come from his office and register his vote by this or some similar device. I am acquainted with two or three Members who never come to this House, but who spend all of their time at their residences.

Whenever a roll call is ordered they take their autos and come right here; they get here in time to answer on the second roll call, but of course we should not consider their convenience, those isolated cases, but we should consider the convenience of the greatest number of Members and the practical condition of affairs, namely, the way the Members do their work to-day in their offices, in connection with their floor duties.

It is to be assumed, Mr. Chairman, that some practicable device, which will be accurate, can register the will of the Members. I can not see how the adoption of such a device will in any way infringe upon the rights or privileges of the Members. It is accurate; it will be permanent; it will register their votes and in full view of the House. They will know exactly how they vote; there can not be any question about it; there can not be any manipulation whereby it will be subject to abuse. It will be an accurate register of the vote.

Furthermore, gentlemen, many times a record vote in the House is refused because of the lateness of the session or because it is getting near the hour of adjournment when our dinners are in jeopardy. If we had this device we would know that we could take a vote in a few minutes and that we could register for all time the opinions of the majority and minority. I say to you in all frankness that I do not think that the question of whether it will lead to a record vote in the Committee of the Whole is involved. That is a matter for the Rules Committee. We could have that to-day if we wanted it. That is a matter for subsequent consideration. The only thing we want to consider now is the practical question whether we are in favor of saving a half hour of our time whenever there is a roll call and whether we desire to cease wasting valuable time, time which we can utilize to advantage in doing other work.

THE CHAIRMAN. Is it not true that as a rule the roll must be called twice?

MR. STAFFORD. Yes; the roll is always called twice. The whole tendency of the rules of the House has been to do away with filibustering and dilatory tactics.

THE CHAIRMAN. The Speaker is here, and I understand he desires to get away.

#### STATEMENT OF HON. CHAMP CLARK, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

MR. CLARK. All I want to say about this device is that if it is practicable I am in favor of it, provided it does not cost too much. Somebody told me that in one of the long sessions we wasted two whole months in calling the roll. I have no doubt in the world that such a device would be a great time saver, but the price ought to be reasonable.

#### STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM H. STAFFORD—Continued.

MR. STAFFORD. I was about to say, in closing, that the whole tendency of the rules of the House has been to prevent dilatory and filibustering tactics. I can not see how we can infringe in any wise upon the rights of the minority by the adoption of this system. The

minority should not claim the right of filibustering by having needless roll calls. By the adoption of this system the registering of the vote, as I see it, will be expedited; there will be more frequent record votes, the time of the Members will be saved and none of their privileges will be invaded.

Mr. KONOP. On the question of filibustering, can you point to any one instance in the House of Representatives where a filibuster defeated a bill?

Mr. STAFFORD. Oh, yes.

Mr. MILLER. The shipping bill.

Mr. KONOP. That was in the Senate.

Mr. STAFFORD. I remember a filibuster inaugurated by Mr. Mann in the closing days of the Sixty-first Congress, when we started in on the war claims proposition; the filibuster started at 12 o'clock and continued until 10 o'clock Friday; it began the next morning and continued until the next Sunday afternoon, and I might add that I was an humble participant in that great event.

Mr. KONOP. Filibusters may be effective on the 3d of March or along toward the end of a session which must close under the Constitution, but I think the instances are very few where a filibuster in the House really accomplishes anything at this time.

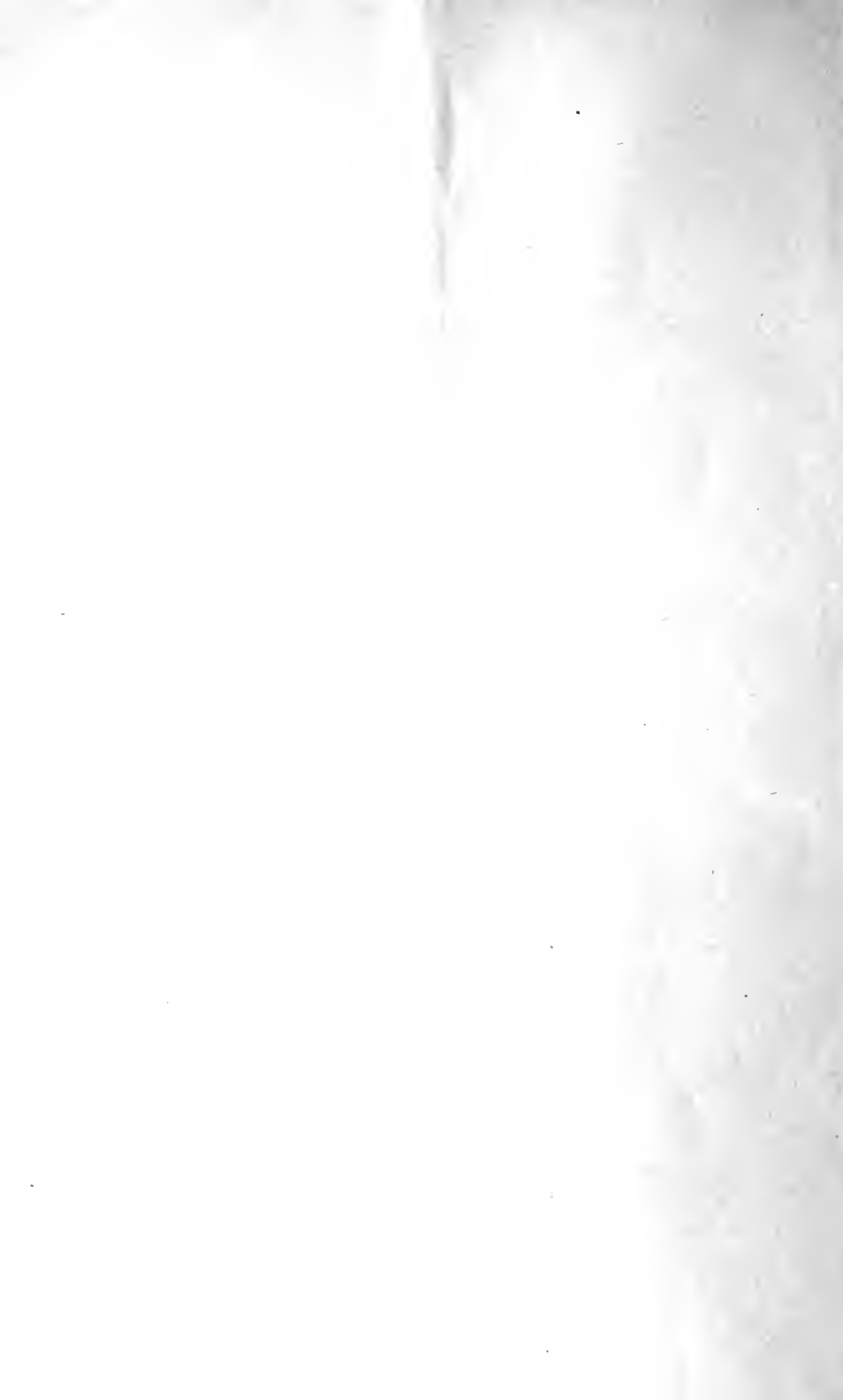
Mr. STAFFORD. I quite agree with you; under the rules of the House a filibuster is impracticable, because the Rules Committee, backed by a majority of the House, can at any time bring in a rule which will make the filibuster ineffective. As a matter of fact, we are here for business, and we might as well face this one fact, that with the legislation of Congress becoming greater and greater as the years go on we must find some means whereby we can restrict time-wasting methods and concentrate it on real legislation. As I look forward to the legislative history of the House I believe we are going to be in session seven, eight, and nine months each year, and we should try to so conserve the valuable time of the Members in the House as to bring those sessions to as early a close as possible. We have plenty of legislation to consider; the calendar is just filled with proposed legislation, and I hope you gentlemen will favor some device which will certainly save the time of the Members of the House on each individual roll call at least one-half hour. I will not undertake to go into the question of a record vote in the Committee of the Whole. That is another question entirely and one that is ulterior to the question under consideration.

The CHAIRMAN. We are much obliged to you, Mr. Stafford.

#### STATEMENT OF HON. MICHAEL K. REILLY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WISCONSIN.

Mr. REILLY. I just want to say that I am heartily in favor of the adoption of some mechanical device that will enable the House to spend more time in legislating and less time in calling the roll. I agree with Mr. Stafford that as to what effect the adoption of such device will have in Committee of the Whole is aside from this question and has nothing to do with this proposition at all.

The CHAIRMAN. You are exactly right about that, and I am glad you have made that point.





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